

26 December 1959

card
Stewart Alsop, Esq.

Dear Stewart:

Many thanks for your note of the 19th. I particularly enjoyed reading your condemnation of "sheeplike behavior" -- possibly I will qualify as a "ram".

In any event, I should much enjoy a further discussion of the issue on which we seemed to have some difference of opinion the other evening. I am not altogether sure they are irreconcilable.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

AWD/c

- 1 - DCI via Reading
- 1 - ER via Col. Grogan to note & return
(Basic to ER)

(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FILE *A*)

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STEWART ALSOP

STAT

December 19th, 1959

Dear Allen;

I thought the marked portion of the enclosed piece might amuse you.

But I am stubborn enough to wish that you would have one of your experts dig out some of the studies made at the time of the Korean war of the effectiveness of nuclear weapons used against troops in the field, normally deployed and normally protected. I have done a lot of homework on this subject, and nuclear weapons are a tremendously effective weapon against cities--- but not against armies.

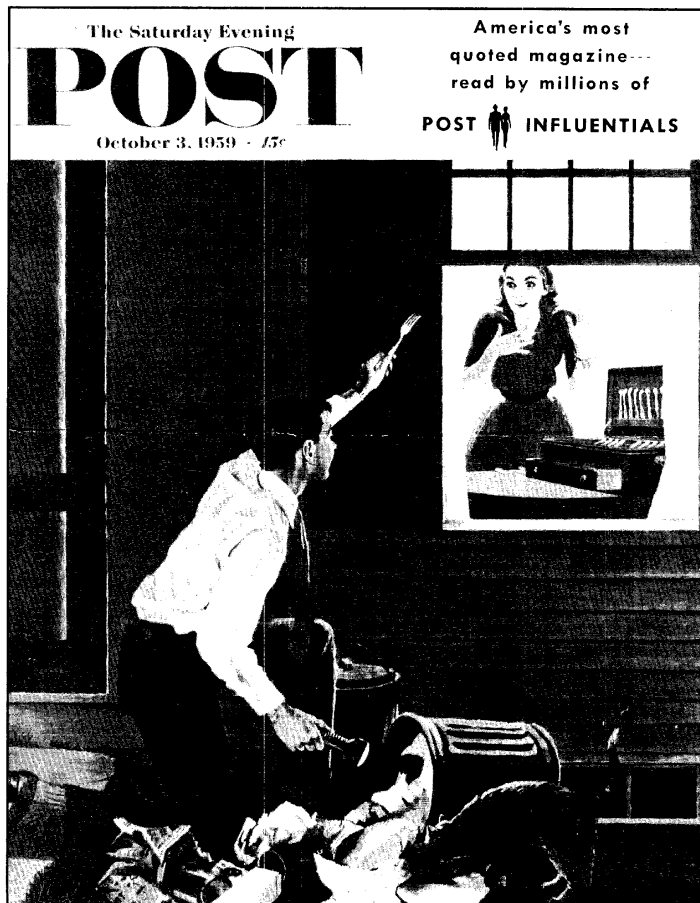
It was good to see you and
Clover, and one day I'd like to
pursue this and other subjects further.

Yours
Stewart

Let's Stop Acting Like Sheep

By STEWART ALSOP

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"Sheep and the stand-up-for-your-rights crowd would do well to believe in the following steps."



"You say there's been a MISTAKE?"



"LET ME SEE THE MANAGER!"

Let's Stop Acting Like Sheep

By STEWART ALSOP

A *Post* editor takes Americans to task for shamelessly allowing themselves to be browbeaten in hotels, restaurants and other public places and offers his own infallible remedy.

The United States could be a better place to live in if more Americans were to take, on appropriate occasions, three simple steps:

First, they would have to turn purple, puce, or some other shade—(the precise shade is a matter of opinion; meanwhile, the eyes will pop out in a menacing fashion).

Then, they would have to stand up, while holding both arms with fists clenched.

Finally, they would have to utter a shout of outraged protest, such as "You've got to be kidding!" or some other remark, depending on the initiation of a first-class row.

Now, the majority of us have forgotten, or never learned, how to make a first-class

row. We Americans have been acting far too much like a herd of docile, hypothyroid sheep. As a result we are being treated more and more like sheep, especially when we are traveling. Clerks, waiters, ticket agents, managers and the like herd us about or bark at us like sheep dogs or loftily disregard us, and most of us hardly dare utter a protesting "Baa-aa." As long as we go on acting like sheep, we shall go on being treated like sheep.

The purpose of this report is to introduce a new movement, whose adherents will be certified as Master Row Makers, or Row Makers of the Second Class, the certificate to bear the inspiring slogan: SHEEP OF AMERICA, ARISE—YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR TEMPER. United under this slogan we must learn to complain. When

complaint is justified, we must learn to complain long and loud. We must learn the art of making a first-class row.

It is an ancient and honorable art. Techniques vary. My brother, Joseph Alsop, for example, widely known and respected for his row-making abilities, is the acknowledged master of the technique of prolonged, wordless hopping and arm waving as a prelude to starting the row. He is also no mean eye popper. His eyes pop out in such a way as to cause the "knotted and combined locks" of the object of his just wrath to part, as Shakespeare neatly put it, "and each particular hair to stand on end, like quills upon the fretful porpoise." His performance is so effective that it has not infrequently been assumed that he was having some sort of fit—

physicians have occasionally been summoned by awed onlookers. The total effect is curiously paralyzing, so that resistance to my brother's just demands in the later phases of the row-making process is rare.

To qualify as a Master Row Maker it is necessary to master the technique of simultaneous eye popping and hopping and waving. I myself, I must confess, have never achieved that exalted rank—I am a mere Row Maker of the Second Class. I was not even a row maker of any sort until a few years ago, when a plane in which I was flying to Rome came down in the Azores. A new motor would have to be flown in, the airline official explained—might take a couple of days or so. Meanwhile bunks would be furnished the passengers. A couple of hours later an almost empty plane of another line landed on the Azores: its destination, Rome. I was in a desperate hurry to get to Rome, I explained to the official—I had a number of important appointments. Could I therefore transfer to the other plane?

The official laughed. It was a small, tittery, superior laugh, and I shall never forget it, for it marked a turning point in my life. It was out of the question, he said between giggles—against all regulations. It was the laugh that did it—as in a dream a mental image appeared before my eyes of my brother, hopping up and down, eyes bugging out, while the expression of pleased complacency on the official's face changed to horror and consternation. Suddenly I found myself hopping up and down too. By the standards of a Master Row Maker it was an amateurish effort, no doubt—eyes insufficiently popped, shouts not strangled or outraged enough. But it did the trick. Within less than an hour I was on my way to Rome.

Since then I have specialized in the art of "puce facing," as I have come to call it. Puce facing is a gentler technique favored by Second-Class Row Makers, who lack the inspired frenzy of the masters. Naturally somewhat rubicund of countenance, I have learned the technique—it consists largely of holding the breath while thinking angry thoughts—of causing the face to turn a shade described by objective observers as "brick red, tinged with a bluish black." The face simultaneously puffs out in the manner of the fish of the family *Tetraodontidae*, which blow up like balloons when their bellies are tickled. Puce facing is not as effective as really first-class eye popping and hopping and waving. But it qualifies a man for a Second-Class certificate.

Now here one point should be made abundantly clear. There are precisely two just causes for making a row. They are clearly defined on the Row Makers' Certificate: "ONE. Failure to honor a stated or clearly implied commitment. Two. Treatment of the Row Maker as a statistical entity or idiot child rather than as a sensible human being." The Row Makers' Certificate is also sternly explicit: "The making of a row for any cause other than the two just causes will result in the removal of the certificate and immediate expulsion from the movement."

Nothing has done the honorable cause of row making more harm than the phony row maker, the man who without real provocation makes a lot of fake-angry noise simply to show that he is important. You've seen him howling at some innocent waitress for no reason at all except to impress a lady friend or potential customer, or badgering a bartender for putting too much vermouth in his martini after failing first to specify what kind of martini he wanted. This man is the enemy of all true row makers. So is the man who takes out his wrath on some small

and innocent person who cannot really do anything to right whatever wrong has been done. This may relieve the feelings, as does kicking a table after you have barked your shins on it. But it must be well understood that the true row maker is not actuated by such solely selfish motives as a desire to relieve the feelings. On the contrary, although private convenience may certainly be served, the first concern of the true row maker is the public weal.

Let us consider an example. As a qualified row maker, you have reserved a room at some vast metropolitan hotel. Your reservation has been confirmed. You arrive late and weary, longing for bed. There is a convention in town. You wait with your herd of fellow sheep for your turn at the reception desk—one very big hotel I know of even has roped-in waiting enclosures into which its guest sheep are briskly herded. At last you are permitted to ask for your room.

The clerk shuffles negligently through some papers. "Must be some mistake, sir," he says in a perfunctory tone, not even bothering to look up. "We have no record of a reservation. Sorry. No room available."

Because he is accustomed to dealing with sheep, he expects to hear you move on, perhaps muttering a bit under your breath. But he is in for a surprise. For this, as you instantly recognize, is Just Cause No. 1—failure to honor a commitment. Warned by some sixth sense, or possibly by the gasps of the onlookers, the clerk looks up to see the never-to-be-forgotten sight of a qualified row maker in the preliminary phase: face puce, eyes popped, rhythmically hopping and waving. This silent phase lasts for the prescribed minute—its purpose being to convince the clerk that you are angry. Not just a little bit miffed, mind you—the other side is accustomed to us sheep being a little bit miffed—but enraged, incensed, infuriated, wrathful, indignant and, in short, sore as hell. The clerk must be convinced that this is not a case that can be handled with a mollifying excuse or a tart rejoinder.

In the second phase of the process, the emphasis must be on noise, coupled with the insistence on seeing Someone in Authority. Mere assistant managers should be angrily dismissed, and highly audible demands—audible, let us say, to approximately the sixth floor—should be made for the manager himself. "He's in bed? Then GET HIM OUT OF BED. Why should he be dosed down like a pig in straw while I am condemned by his unpardonable incompetence to sleep on a park bench?" Suits should be threatened. Letters to the president, the board chairman and the directors of the hotel company should be outlined in some detail. Names of local politicians or other persons of influence should be invoked—it does not matter a pin, of course, if they have never heard of you. It has even been found effective, when you cannot remember such names, to make them up—"Warren G. Smithers, who happens to be a close friend of mine, shall hear of this."

When words fail, a loud, wordless ululation is often most effective. Other techniques may occur to you. One of my acquaintances when sufficiently aroused barks like a dog. My younger brother, John, has mastered an original technique of shouting at the offending party in a sinister Russian accent which he has cultivated. By such means everybody within earshot should be made aware that a major public row is in progress.

The chances are then excellent that you will get the bridal suite at cut rates. It is

also possible, of course, that you will get a punch in the snout. But that is a risk which, as a public-spirited citizen, the row maker must be willing to accept. For in the future the hotel management will be far less cavalier about a failure to honor a confirmed reservation. And thus, as always when the true row maker is in operation, the public welfare is wedded to private interest.

How many well-traveled readers of this article have in the recent past suffered a failure to honor a reservation or some similar indignity? And how many, having uttered a few *sotto voce* imprecations, have turned sullenly away to shift for themselves? Far too many is the undoubted answer. For row making has become almost a lost art.

Let the middle-aged reader of this article think of his father. If his father was like most fathers, he was perfectly willing, if someone treated him like a fool or failed to honor a commitment, to make a row. Indeed, the chances are that he rather enjoyed it, and the noisier and more public the better. But our generation is increasingly conditioned to act like sheep. We get positively embarrassed if somebody makes a scene, no matter how justified, as though legs had been mentioned in a Victorian drawing room. Why have we become so sheeplike?

No doubt the war had something to do with it. "Don't you know there's a war on?" became an excuse for bad service during the war, and the bad service lingered on when the excuse had ceased to exist. Maybe expense accounts have something to do with it—some travelers on expense accounts have a mistaken notion that, since the dollars they are spending are not their own, they have no right to complain.

But I'm inclined to think there's another, deeper reason for our increasing sheepishness—the curious "life-adjustment" theory that has been taught in a lot of schools for many years now. If you are brought up to believe that life is something you adjust yourself to and that it is wrong and even immoral to expect life to do a little adjusting to you, all you can do is mutter "kismet" or the equivalent, and placidly accept such blows as fate or the hotel manager may have in store for you.

This conditioning to sheeplike behavior has infected our political life. There is, for example, nothing more enjoyable than a good, loud political argument. Winning a political argument requires very specialized techniques, such as The Irrelevant but Impressive Historical Allusion, The Use of Made-up Figures to Overwhelm the Opposition, The Amused and Condescending Laugh and The Prolonged, Contemptuous Silence. But that is another subject. The point I want to make is that even in Washington, the most political of towns, a good, angry political argument is getting harder and harder to stir up. And when you do get one going—with both sides shouting at one another, banging on the table, employing such techniques as those named above with great enjoyment and ruthless dexterity—there are apt to be some in the company who display a pained embarrassment, as though there were something wrong about having a fine old political dispute.

Nowadays you hear people saying that something is "a controversial subject" as though that meant it was a subject which ought not to be discussed. Good heavens! Controversy is the wellspring of freedom. Maybe this fear of controversial subjects is what's wrong with our conduct of foreign affairs. As we all become more sheeplike, our Government does too. The

American Government never puce faces, or ululates, or eye pops. It leaves all the row making up to other people—South American dictators or Nikita Khrushchev. The first necessary qualification for the next President ought to be a certificate as a Master Row Maker.

I think a lot of the trouble comes from Efficiency—not real efficiency, but the kind spelled with an audible capital letter by its worshippers. According to the doctrine of this kind of Efficiency, we are no longer individuals. We are means, or averages, or statistical entities. Means, averages or statistical entities don't get angry, so they can therefore be handled in an efficient way. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean.

Recently a customer ordered Asparagus Hollandaise in one of the very toniest restaurants in New York. The asparagus, when it arrived, was asparagus all right, but the sauce was a rather tired white sauce laced with lemon juice. Under Just Cause No. 1 above—"Failure to honor a stated or clearly implied commitment"—the customer, a well-known row maker, made a row. The headwaiter, when summoned, confessed with a shrug that the chef had been expressly forbidden by the management to serve real hollandaise sauce—it took too much time, and besides most of the customers didn't know the difference anyway.

Another example. The editor of our Greatest National Magazine—modesty forbids us to identify the periodical in question—was due to appear as an honor guest at a banquet at one of New York's plushiest hotels. For convenience, he made a reservation at that hotel. On arrival he found two long lines of weary passengers herded in front of a couple of reservation windows. He shuffled down his line for a full half hour, and just as he arrived at the window, a clerk slammed down a sign—NEXT WINDOW PLEASE—and disappeared. The editor had another half hour of shuffling in line and he was late for his banquet.

It was Efficient to serve white sauce instead of hollandaise—as means, averages, or statistical entities, most of the customers of the tony restaurant no doubt did not know the difference. It was Efficient for the hotel to keep its customers waiting in line—money was thus saved on clerk hire. But sure as fate, that restaurant will lose its reputation, which is as important to an expensive restaurant as it is to a lady. And although the editor did not make a row—he is not a row maker—he will never go back to that hotel again, and in this determination he will not be alone.

Efficiency—in short, the kind of Efficiency which treats people like statistical entities—is very bad business in the long run. It is the noble mission of us row makers to remind the worshippers of Efficiency of that simple fact.

Mind you, there is such a thing as genuine efficiency. And although the purpose of this article is to carp, it must be said in all justice that the American traveler runs into a lot more real efficiency than the phony kind.

There was a time when, if you were rich, you could enjoy a kind of luxury which has now disappeared in this country and is fast disappearing even in Europe—the luxury of hands. Its symbol is the little box with four bells which you still find beside your bed in a European luxury hotel. Beside each bell is a little figure, representing a lady's maid, a valet, a waiter, a chambermaid—eight hands to serve you.

Ring a bell, and almost immediately one of these little figures will appear in the flesh to clean up after you, or

him face the fact that it is by no means a good idea to have a car that is a little over a half ton, with an insulating mass of steel and glass, and a high speed engine, with a lot of big windows. When in motion, it has to keep with my 100 lbs. of baggage, and to have some of the things I need at any rate, is a thing that even the American hotel owner or garage owner would dislike to put up with. I am sure that as a consequence, the car is not so open and free as the ones that I have. In others, I find a lot of things that are extraordinary, but I do not find anything that is really good. I have come to the winter, and I am sure that it is the best time to

My other complaint about the airline concerns the weather. Everybody but a idiot child knows that flights are sometimes delayed or canceled because of the weather. No sensible person blames the airlines for this fact of life—it is a drawback more than compensated for by the speed, comfort and increasing safety of air travel. But, why do some airlines have to treat their customers like idiot children where the weather is concerned?

And yet we row makers must, in the words of that immortal row maker, Sir Winston Churchill, 'never surrender.'

By making a run like in a White, you will find that, with a bit of practice, it becomes a positive pleasure to do it, what the late Frank Lloyd Wright himself a Master Row Maker, called "a little honest arrogance." Just be in mind the sequence—the pucing of the face, the popping of the eyes, the silent preliminary happening and waving, the climactic out-raged shout—and you, too, may find that for a Row-Maker's Certificate, to do, perhaps, you may even scale the heights to become a Master Row Maker. And always remember that when you think, now for one of the two just causes, you are so far more than your own self-conscience. At considerable personal risk—for there is always the chance of that punch in the snout—you are so on your fellow citizens, even the most sheep-like. And so, sheep of America, rise. You have nothing to lose but your tennis.

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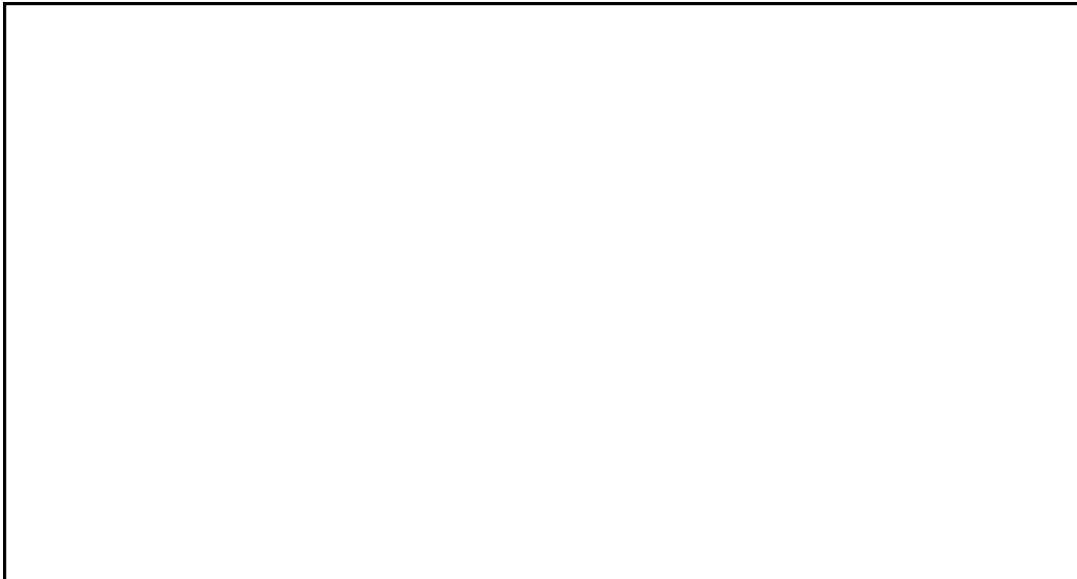
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